

September 18, 2009

## UC San Diego Literature Building Update

During the summer months, Literature Department Chair Oumelbanine Zhiri, Building Committee Chair Roddey Reid, and Committee members have continued to work with former Academic Senate Chair Dan Donoghue and the UC San Diego administration to identify mutually agreed upon actions to improve the workplace environment for individuals working in the Literature Building.

The Building Committee Chair has reported that members reached a consensus to move ahead with five proposed actions that Professor Reid stated are “meaningful steps that should address the concerns expressed by faculty, staff and students in the Literature Department with respect to environmental and health issues affecting the Literature Building.”

The actions, listed below by the proposed sequence with which the steps are expected to be scheduled, are:

- **Initiate a Toxicological Study:** An independent contractor with extensive experience will conduct a toxicological study in the Literature Building. The contractor also will collect samples from within the building so as to ensure the highest degree of independence and confidence in the results. Environmental Health & Safety, under the direction of Vice Chancellor – Resource Management & Planning Gary Matthews, is seeking multiple bidders to conduct the study. Members of the Building Committee will assist in choosing the successful company to complete the study.
- **Improve Ventilation of the Elevator Room:** Auxiliary and Plant Services is installing equipment that will result in better ventilation in the elevator machine room located on the ground floor of the Literature Building.
- **Replace Elevator’s Hydraulic Oil:** The elevator hydraulic oil is being replaced with a vegetable-based bio blend that is environmentally friendly, biodegradable, and non-toxic.
- **Install Walls to Isolate EMF:** In the rooms directly adjacent to the elevator, Auxiliary and Plant Services is installing new walls 18 inches to 60 inches from the existing walls. Following completion of this work, additional EMF measurements will be conducted to ensure that amelioration of EMF levels has been achieved within the rooms created by the new walls. In addition, regions of the building not previously surveyed, particularly the third and fourth floors, will be surveyed for EMF levels to rule out previously unidentified sources.
- **Add Air Conditioning within the Building:** The project to add air conditioning to the Literature Building is now considered of high priority for the campus.

Despite the severe financial shortfall facing the university, as well as the state's longstanding underfunding for campus buildings, the Chancellor, Senior Vice Chancellor and Vice Chancellors are seeking sources for the necessary \$100,000+ the project is expected to cost.

Professor Reid and Committee members are informing Literature Building colleagues of the actions and will continue discussions with the university administration to fine-tune the timeline with a goal for completion of many of the projects by the close of Winter quarter.

Members of the University administration working with Professors Donoghue, Zhiri, and Reid include Academic Senate Chair Bill Hodgkiss, Vice Chancellor Matthews, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Auxiliary and Plant Services Russ Thackston, and Environmental Health and Safety Director Steve Benedict.